ATHLETES of THE BIBLE

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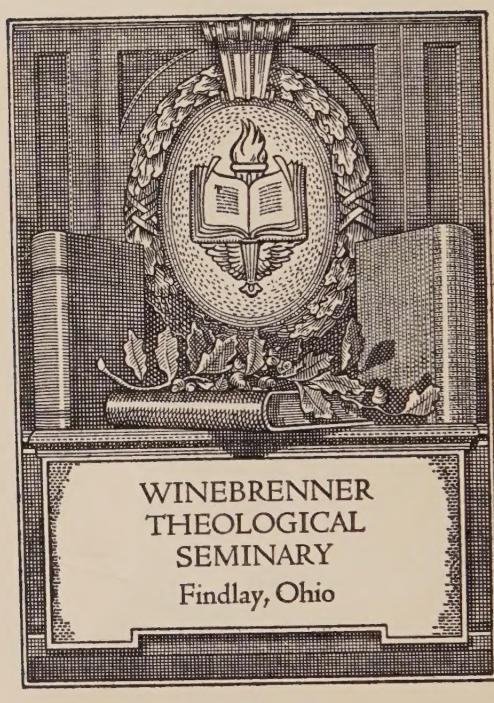

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ATHLETES OF THE BIBLE

UNFAMILIAR ASPECTS OF FAMILIAR MEN

A Study Course
for
Boys and Young Men

BY

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF YOUNG MEN'S
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TO

DR. GEORGE J. FISHER

IN RECOGNITION OF THOSE QUALITIES OF BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT THAT MAKE HIM AN IDEAL TEACHER AND LEADER OF MEN, WHATEVER IS WORTHY IN THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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INTRODUCTION

It is sometimes said that there are Bibles within the Bible—a Bible for youth, a Bible for age, a Bible for the sick, a Bible for the well—in truth, a Bible suited to the various periods and moods of life. All this is another proof of the universality of the Great Book. Springing from all kinds of life, as it surely does, it comes back again to all kinds of life with its peculiarly inspiring message.

And surely we do not read far in the holy pages without discovering that there is a boy's Bible within the big Bible. Each of us can recall the stories that made their appeals to us in our boyhood. We were fond of Moses, of Joseph, of Daniel, of Samuel, and of that anonymous lad who helped Jesus with the miracle of the loaves and fishes. These serve as illustrations of the fact that the nature of a boy will select a Bible from the Bible. Other portions of the record wait until the youth arrives at maturity, while still others wait to comfort him in his old age.

Now this book is an effort to make more real and helpful certain portions of the Bible, that the life of boyhood may be more effectively served. Any man who receives letters from his son knows well what is his boy's chief interest at a particular period. Those naïve epistles brim with the news of recent athletic contests. When he is at home, the father sees the boy

eagerly scanning the pages of the morning paper to find the result of the games. To the seeing parent all this is an indication of the form of appeal that may best be made to the boy's heart. The wise father and the wise teacher will not fail to see the point.

This volume takes advantage both of the nature of the boy and of the nature of the Bible, to bring the boy and the Bible into company with each other. It introduces the boy to those worthies that walk the sacred pages as a kind of holy athletic field. Its aim is to make the Bible properly human and to make athletics properly religious, while, at the same time, appealing to the boy in the natural and God-ordained fashion of his nature. We may be sure that it can have no other effect than to lure youth from fields of physical contest on to the place where they can wrestle against the rulers of the world-darkness, so passing from that bodily exercise which profits a little to that spiritual exercise which has the promise for both great worlds.

EDWIN H. HUGHES.

Resident Bishop M. E. Church,
San Francisco, Cal.

FOREWORD

Several years ago it was suggested to a group of boys in a high school gymnasium class that they ought to take up the study of the Bible. The proposition met with cynical indifference. It was then suggested that they might like to know about an ancient runner who surpassed any Marathon record of modern times, beating a king and his chariot in a race over a rough mountain road in the midst of a blinding storm. The interest of the boys was captured, and in this form they began to study the biography of Elijah. A class on "The Athletes of the Bible" was formed and still continues as a Bible study group.

The course of studies thus begun has since been used in other groups with equal success. It presents the men of the Bible from a viewpoint which will capture the boys and young men. A teacher cannot have a better point of contact than the boy's athletic interest.

The object of these studies is to show to the boys that the men of the Bible are virile and their lives are full of stirring interest. The Bible is an out-of-doors book. Its people lived mostly in the out-of-doors. Their physical prowess is noteworthy. Their physical achievements equal, if they do not surpass, those of modern times. Moreover, Christianity should be taught as a religion of health and vigor, which

expects, by Christ's help, a man's maximum physically, mentally and spiritually.

The lessons are designed to be elastic in the time required for teaching. They will fit a longer or a shorter session. Perhaps the best results will be secured by adapting the material under each Roman numeral to a twenty-minute study period.

It is hoped that teachers of boys' and young men's classes in Bible schools and in the Young Men's Christian Association will find in these studies a corrective for the prevailing misconception among boys and young men that religion is "sissified," that Jesus was effeminate, and that a real "man" has a more virile business than to serve the Kingdom and the Church. With this great mission, the book is prayerfully sent on its way.

B. Deane Brink.
Paul Smith.

Boston, Mass., May 1, 1914.

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DAVID, The Stone Thrower

Study Subject: Control

Definition: Accurate obedience of the muscles to the mind

Biblical Material: I Samuel 16, 17

"For the long breath, the deep breath, the breath of the heart without care—
I will give thanks and adore thee, God of the open air!"

—*Henry van Dyke.*

I. THE ATHLETE

1. **Description of David which was taken to the King.** (I Sam. 16:18.)
   (a) Skilled musician.
   (b) A "mighty" man.
   (c) Brave, "valiant."
   (d) A fighter for good things,—"A man of war."
   (e) "Prudent in matter"—good at head work.
   (f) A "comely" person—attractive to look at.
   (g) "The Lord is with him"—a man of fine character.

2. **Boyhood Life.** (I Sam. 16:11.)
   David as a young man lived a clean and wholesome outdoor life, rightly combining work and play, responsibility and freedom, which will always produce an athletic type of manhood.

3. **David must have been a Man of Large and Powerful Physique.**
   (a) Saul, who was "higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward" (I Sam. 9:2) offered him his armor, which David "girded on." If the average Israelite was five feet nine inches, Saul must have been six feet six inches, and David must have been over six feet tall.

(b) He wielded the giant's sword with apparent ease. (I Sam. 17:51.)

(c) In his shepherd days he killed a "lion" and a "bear." (I Sam. 17:36.)

(d) His exploits in escaping Saul's efforts to kill him would have been possible only to a man of great endurance and superb nerve. This story is found in I Samuel 18:30.

4. Something More is Required to Produce a Winner than Mere Muscle.

(a) In I Samuel 16:6, 7, it seems that David's brother Eliab, from the standpoint of "countenance" or "stature," would have been chosen king.

(b) David was chosen king because while "a man looketh on the outward appearance, God looketh on the heart." David had fine qualities of character.

(c) Often in football an end, like Poe of Princeton, whose weight is light, far surpasses in effectiveness a much heavier man.

(d) Fitzgerald, one of Yale's prominent football stars, said he never feared a dirty player, because a dirty player never had enough ability to depend on his own strength, otherwise he would not need to use dirty methods.

(e) The fellow who is dirty in athletics is very apt in later life to be shady in his business transactions.

5. Besides being Physically Strong, David had Other Accomplishments. He was an All-Round Man.

(a) He played the harp. (I Sam. 16: 16-17.)
(b) He sang.
(c) He wrote poetry. (See the Psalms.)
(d) He had time for fine friendships, like that of Jonathan. (I Sam. 18: 1.)

Questions for Discussion

1. What is an athlete?
2. What seven characteristics of an ideal athlete are mentioned in the description of David? (I Sam. 16: 18.)
3. Find evidence in the story of David's life that proves that he was a man of powerful physique. (I Sam. 17: 36-39 and 51.)
4. What qualities other than muscle are required to produce a successful athlete?
5. Name other accomplishments beside that of athletic ability which tend to make David an example to young manhood.
6. Can a successful athlete also be a Christian?

FOR NOTES

II. TRAINING

1. **The Value of Play.**

   David practised stone throwing while he tended his sheep. This was his play. Relaxation is necessary. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

2. **Physically Helpful Diversion.**

   David found his relaxation and diversion in the right way. Many fail at this point. He made his play build up his body, not tear it down. If he had found his relaxation in his preparatory period in cigarette smoking, for example, he would have permanently weakened his eyesight, decreased his lung capacity, and impaired his control. He never could have killed Goliath if he had not been able to obtain absolute accuracy in stone throwing. (See "Connie" Mack on cigarette smoking, in Appendix.)

3. **Self-Defense.**

   His form of sport also developed his physical powers of self-defense, as do boxing, jiu-jitsu, or wrestling. He could take care of himself under any and all circumstances. David, however, though strong, was not of a combative nature.

4. **The Object of Athletics.**

   All through his boyhood he kept training

rules. This long, slow preparation alone could fit him for his unexpected opportunity. Athletics should always be regarded as fitting for life's later tasks, not merely as an expedient for winning games or medals.

5. **The Need of the Early Start.**

Champion baseball players are not produced in a moment. Their championship skill is built on the training they received in boyhood, as they played baseball in the back lots. A substitute pitcher on a major league team, a boiler-maker who had just fallen short of the Mathewson class, laid his heartbreaking failure to his late start.

6. **The Physical Basis.**

The foundation of David's success was largely physical. Lack of training during the boyhood period may condemn a man to physical inferiority and to ill health for life. Physical stamina is well-nigh indispensable to successful life work. While many physical weaklings have done great things, the vigorous man has a great advantage over the sickly man. Mr. Roosevelt, the sickly boy who became an athletic man, is a good illustration of what can be and ought to be done.

7. **More Important.**

An essential part of David's training was moral and spiritual. The self-restraint and

the high ideals thus learned helped him develop his great physique. While he was still a boy, the report went to the king that "the Lord is with him." The Bible, the Church, and the Christ will greatly help the athlete.

Questions for Discussion

1. What weapon was a part of a shepherd's equipment?
2. What opportunity had David to practise an art at which he displayed wonderful skill?
3. What were the physical effects of David's amusements?
4. What is the purpose of play and athletics?
5. How does play develop control?
6. What is the fault of the delayed start in developing control?
7. How important are physical strength and stamina?
8. What beside exercise was an essential part in David's training?
9. How does Christianity help in the making of a successful athlete?
10. To whom did David give credit for his great physical strength? (Psalms 18: 32-34.)

FOR NOTES

III. THE EVENT

1. **A Dangerous Foe.**

   The bully, Goliath, headed the formidable army of Philistines which threatened Israel's national existence. (I Sam. 17:1-10 and 16.)

2. **A National Need.**

   The failure at this national crisis to find any man with skill and courage enough to meet the challenge. (I Sam. 17:11.)

3. **The Man of the Hour.**

   The appearance of David on the scene, unsuspecting the nearness of his opportunity, but prepared for it by his long training. (I Sam. 17:22-27.)

4. **No Effort at Grandstand Play.**

   He fought with familiar weapons, refusing to participate in any event for which he was not trained. He had not "proved" swords and armor. (I Sam. 17:38-40.)

5. **Making Good.**

   Superb control in the crisis. He was at his best when his best was needed. No nervousness nor stage fright. His training gave him confidence. He threw a stone with such perfect accuracy that it struck the small open spot on the forehead, the only vulnerable opening beneath the "helmet of brass."

6. Modern Parallels in Control.

(a) Mathewson, the Giants' veteran pitcher, in the only game won by his team in the world series in 1913, with two men on bases in the ninth inning, struck out two batters and saved the day.

(b) In the season of 1913, Brickley, Harvard's great full-back, won the Yale-Harvard game by his timely goal kicking.

7. The Secret of Heroism.

Part of David's success was due to his belief in the cause for which he wanted to win. It was God's cause. He felt he was fighting the eternal battle between right and wrong. He could answer Goliath: "Thou comest to me with a sword and a spear and a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts." It makes a difference whether one fights for selfish gain or for some great unselfish object. Read "Horatius at the Bridge."

8. Divine Reinforcement.

It is a simple fact of history that the man who has God to strengthen him has been the man who has accomplished the seemingly impossible. The Bible speaks of one man "chasing a thousand, and two putting ten thousand to flight." (Deut. 32:30.)

Lincoln, on the night before the battle of

Gettysburg, was conscious of the presence of God and had an assurance of victory.

9. An Athlete's Hymn.

David, later recognizing this, sang thus of the divine help in becoming a successful athlete:

For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.
It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.
He maketh my feet like deer's feet, ...
He teacheth my hands skill with weapons, so that a bow of steel is broken by my arms.

(Psalm 18: 29, 32-34.)

Questions for Discussion

1. What national crisis threatened the Israelitish nation in David's youth? (I Sam. 17: 1-7.)

2. Explain the failure of the nation to produce a man to meet his emergency. (I Sam. 17: 7-11.)

3. Why was David able to do what no one else was willing to undertake? (I Sam. 17: 37.)

4. Why did he refuse the weapons offered him? (I Sam. 17: 38-40.) What did he select when he met the Philistine champion?

5. What part did control play in this contest? (I Sam. 17: 49.)

6. Name some modern parallels showing similar wonderful control.

7. What is the secret of true heroism?

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

ELIJAH, The Long Distance Runner

Study Subject: Endurance

Definition: The power of doing or bearing without giving way

Biblical Material: I Kings 17-19

"We do wrong when we live beneath our privilege; and knowing that we ought to exercise every day, we sin when we yield to the constant, deadening habit of sedentary life."—*Frances Willard.*

IV. AN OUT-OF-DOORS MAN

1. Natural Environment.

Gilead, in which is located Elijah's birthplace, Tishbet, "was a wild mountain district, on the eastern side of Jordan, bordering on the great desert." This mountain range varied from three thousand to four thousand feet in height. Elijah always lived and loved the out-of-doors life. "Lonely mountains and bleak deserts were congenial to his spirit."

2. Training which Makes for Endurance.

(a) He camps in caves by the brook Cherith. (I Kings 17:3.)

(b) He wears a mantle of rough camel's hair. (II Kings 1:8.)

(c) He haunts the slopes of Mount Carmel. (I Kings 18:20.)

(d) He spends some time in a cave at Horeb. (I Kings 19:9.)

(e) He sleeps under a desert broom (juniper tree). (I Kings 19:5.)

(f) He has the iron frame which enables him to endure practically a forty days' fast. (I Kings 19:8.)

(g) So complete is his knowledge of the country that for three years he can evade Ahab's soldiers, so that they think his escape is due to his "being borne hither

and thither by the spirit of Jehovah." (I Kings 18:12; II Kings 2:16.)

(h) There is no evidence that he cared for the cities or visited them except as he came on business as the messenger of Jehovah, immediately returning to his wild home on the mountain-side.

(i) Some of these characteristics we find in the modern Bedouin.

(j) Of Elijah, it has been said by a poet that his father was the mountain and his mother the desert.

(k) Living so much in solitude, Elijah must have been highly skilled as a hunter. Possibly this is what is meant by saying the ravens brought him meat. Only in the drought was he forced to go to the widow in the distant city to find food. (I Kings 17:8-9.)

3. The Modern Equivalent.

In modern life, the nearest approach we can make to Elijah's training is fresh air, simple food, and plenty of outdoor exercise.

4. God in the Mountains.

A trip to the mountains is often a revelation to the city boy. One gets a different idea of God and of nature and of life in the silent presence of these endless solitudes. The mountaineer has always been an alert, sturdy and stern type of man. Read "Trail of the

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Lonesome Pine," "Shepherd of the Hills," "Freckles."

5. **God in the Desert.**

A man forced by illness to camp in the desert, seeing no human face except his messenger, who came every third day, said: "Out there on the desert you can't get away from God. The silence is so great you don't like to hear your own voice. And after a few weeks of it, you can't help hearing God's voice. It is the most certain thing in the desert."

6. **The Source of Bravery.**

With this training, it is not strange that God should have been the one great fact in life to Elijah. Seeing God in his power in nature, and understanding how much more powerful God is than any man, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel and the soldiers did not frighten him much.

7. **A Mistaken Idea.**

In view of the foregoing, the usual idea of the prophets, as portrayed, for instance, in Sargent's painting, that they are effeminate, bloodless, and weak, is a mistaken one.

8. **The Moral Equivalent of War.**

The Christian life has been called "the moral equivalent of war." The strongest and most virile qualities of life are required for

Christ-likeness. It is a pitiful mistake to think following the Master is weak or "sissified"; the stronger the man, the better the Christian.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the type of country in which Elijah was born and lived??
2. What kind of training made for his great endurance? (I Kings 17:3, 18:20, 19:5-9; II Kings 1:8-9, 2:16.)
3. What has been the effect on the physical life of to-day by the change from country to city life?
4. How near can we approach Elijah's manner of life under modern conditions?
5. What effect have the vastness and solitude of the mountain and desert on our religious ideas?
6. What is the source of true bravery?

FOR NOTES

V. THE MARATHON

1. **The National Crisis.**
   (a) King Ahab married the Princess Jezebel of Phœnicia.
   (b) The religion of Phœnicia was unspeakably degraded, resulting in evil practices, as is the case with most Oriental religions.
   (c) After his marriage, Ahab made this the court religion instead of the pure, uplifting worship of Jehovah. Jezebel imported four hundred and fifty corrupt priests.
   (d) Whether Israel should become a petty and degraded Oriental kingdom, or the nation should continue to be the chosen people who eventually would give the world Christianity, its final religion, was the question at issue. (I Kings 16:29-33.)

2. **The Saviour of the Nation.**
   (a) The king had absolute power of life and death, and for a time no one dared to oppose him.
   (b) Suddenly out of the mountains appeared this mighty man Elijah, who dramatically confronted the king and told him his sin and brought drought and famine. (I Kings 17:1.)
   (c) The king searched for three years at home and in neighboring countries during

the famine for Elijah, but could not capture him.

(d) At last Elijah again confronted the king, and arranged the great test of religion on Mount Carmel. The "fire from heaven" may have been something like a bolt of lightning which struck Elijah's altar. (I Kings 18:16-39.)

(e) After it had been proved that Jehovah, not Baal, was the true God, and all the people had cried out, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God," then Elijah promised the end of the drought.

3. The Run.

(a) Elijah ordered Ahab the king to hurry home to Jezreel before the rain should prevent his going. (I Kings 18:44-46.)

(b) He knew that the real fight against the false religion had to be fought with Queen Jezebel at Jezreel.

(c) So, under the inspiration of his great battle, for "the hand of the Lord was upon him," he set out to beat Ahab to Jezreel.

(d) The distance was sixteen miles.

(e) The speed surpassed that of the war horses attached to the king's chariot.

(f) The run was made during a fierce storm.

4. Historical.

The first "Marathon" was run in 490 B. C. by a messenger bringing to Athens the news

of the decisive defeat at the village of Marathon of the Persian army by the Greeks under Miltiades. The distance was twenty-six miles, and after delivering his message the runner fell dead.

5. The Danger of Overdoing.

An athlete may exhibit endurance in wind and muscle that far surpasses the capacity of heart and kidneys. The result may be a broken constitution, a dilated heart, a damaged kidney, a life of comparative inefficiency.

6. Modern Parallels.

(a) Olympic games in Athens, 1896.

JAMES THORPE'S RECORDS AT OLYMPIC GAMES, 1913

Pentathlon.

Running broad jump, 23 feet, 3 inches.
Javelin throw, 170 feet, 1 inch.
200-meter run, 23 seconds.
1500-meter run, 4 minutes, 44 seconds.
Discus throw, 116 feet, 9 inches.

Decathlon.

100-yard dash, 10 3-5 seconds.
16-pound shot, 44 feet, 3 1-8 inches.
High jump, 6 feet, 1 1-4 inches.
½-mile walk, 4 minutes, 37 seconds.
Hammer throw, 122 feet, 10 inches.
Pole vault, 9 feet, 6 inches.
High hurdle, 16 2-5 seconds.

56-pound weight, 26 feet, 2 inches.
Mile run, 5 minutes, 26 seconds.

7. Not a Feat of Bravado.

This Marathon of Elijah was not a mere spectacular athletic stunt. It was a great piece of service in an emergency. While it might be glorious to sacrifice one's strength or life to serve some fine cause, it is no credit to run a Marathon only for self-pride or display. Physical strength, like all other talents, is given to be used for making the world a better one.

Questions for Discussion

1. Describe the political and religious situation in Israel at the time this Marathon occurred.
2. From what you have learned of the early life of Elijah, what sort of a man was it who faced King Ahab and his queen?
3. How long did Elijah live an outlaw in the Gilead mountains?
4. Describe the fire test on Mount Carmel.
5. Give an account of the Marathon.
6. Name some modern parallel.
7. What are the dangers to be avoided in athletics?

FOR NOTES

VI. THE ENDURANCE WALK

1. The Mountaineer's Defeat and Danger.

(a) The supernatural manifestations of Jehovah on Mount Carmel failed to impress Queen Jezebel, who vowed vengeance upon the enemy of her religion.

(b) She sends word to Elijah that before another day she will have his life in return for the lives of the slain four hundred and fifty priests of Baal. (I Kings 19:1-2.)

(c) In utter discouragement, feeling he has lost the great battle to save his nation, Elijah begins his long flight into the wilderness. (I Kings 19:3-4.)

(d) His dejection reaches its climax after he has covered nineteen miles the first day, and he sleeps under a desert broom or "juniper tree" (I Kings 19:5). Fatigue lessens the power of resistance and tends to mental depression. Temptations are most dangerous when one is tired.

(e) At this time, he comes dangerously near to quitting, but his grit returns in the morning when he is physically rested, and he feels again that God is with him.

(f) A close study of Abraham Lincoln's life shows that his experience was like Elijah's under the juniper tree. Repeatedly, as before Gettysburg, he felt a distinct re-

assurance from God that there was no need to give up, because the right would prevail. Like Elijah, he came gradually to understand God's ways better and to trust him with a more complete confidence.

2. The Physical Aspects of the Endurance Walk.

(a) Extra effort to escape the danger of Jezebel's threat carried him swiftly to Beersheba from Jezreel.

(b) Leaving his servant, he goes along "a day's journey" into the wilderness and camps wherever nightfall overtakes him. (I Kings 19:4.)

(c) Throughout his journey he sleeps in the open.

(d) So far as he has food, he finds it in the wild country he is traversing. He ate very little, so that the time is described as a "fast." (I Kings 19:8.)

(e) The mountain climbing and the hot desert stretches made the going so difficult that it is doubtful if a less hardy traveler could have survived the hardships.

(f) Calculating the distance as two hundred and eighty miles, he must have covered an average of from five miles to ten miles a day for forty consecutive days.

(g) The feat is the more remarkable when Elijah's mental depression is considered.

3. **The Purpose of the Walk.** (I Kings 19: 9-13.)

(a) Elijah was running away from Jezebel, the queen, although shortly before he had successfully defied the king and his army and the four hundred and fifty priests armed with knives.

(b) His violent and bloody effort to save the religion of his fathers had seemingly failed and he wanted time to think.

(c) At Horeb, "the mount of God," he would find safety from his enemies and could, in the solitude, learn from God the cause of his failure.

(d) This endurance walk was really a search for God and his will.

(e) At the journey's end, during the storm, when Elijah had gone from the cave where he was camping to the "mount of the Lord," he saw an earthquake and a great wind and a fire, and then heard an inner still, small voice.

(f) Elijah thus learned that while God is a God of power, Lord of nature and of physical strength, the appeal of the "still, small voice" to conscience is the only way false religion can be overthrown.

(g) Having learned his mistake, he returned, and at last, by other and better methods than killing four hundred and fifty men,

he succeeded in his life work of saving the religion of Israel, and the sin of Ahab and Jezebel brought them both to untimely death.

4. A Modern Parallel of Physical Endurance.

Mr. Weston, traversing thousands of miles afoot each year, furnishes a remarkable physical parallel to the endurance of Elijah.

5. Providence.

In spite of Elijah's mistakes, God cared for him and brought his bungling efforts to success. It is a wonderful teaching of the Bible that this is true of us all—God seeks us until we find him, and uses and overrules even our mistakes for the largest good to ourselves and to his kingdom.

6. Seeking God.

Every man must find God for himself. No one else can do it for him. Sometimes this happens in a church service, a men's meeting, or in a revival; sometimes it happens in very early childhood. After this conversion, when we get personally acquainted with God, we go on finding more and more of him by continued seeking. Elijah had his supreme experience with God out in the woods all by himself, and then came back to serve him where the crowds were.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was Elijah's physical condition when he received the message from Queen Jezebel?
2. What was the effect of the message? (I Kings 19:3-4.)
3. What relation does fatigue have to this mental attitude?
4. In what way does Lincoln's life show a parallel to Elijah?
5. Describe some of the aspects of the endurance walk.
6. What made the walk a remarkable one?
7. What was the real purpose of the walk?
8. What methods did he use after this experience?
9. What is endurance?
10. Name several parallels of endurance?
11. What truth is illustrated in the life of Elijah?

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

SAMSON, The Weight Lifter

Study Subject: Strength

Definition: Capacity for exertion

Biblical Material: Judges 13-17

"It is a good thing to laugh, to throw the head back and let the blood into the veins, and let the arteries rest, so that we may store up energy."—*G. Stanley Hall.*

VII. A MAN WITH A BIG CHANCE

1. **The Philistines.**
   (a) After the entrance into Canaan of the Israelites under Joshua, they were continually fighting for their lives against the surrounding peoples.
   (b) Among the most powerful and persistent of these enemies were the Philistines.
   (c) At Samson's birth, the Philistines had extended their power over the territory of the Danites, his native tribe, and over the territory of Judah.

2. **The Birth of Samson.** (Judges 13.)
   (a) In great national emergencies, God has always raised up a leader for his people.
   (b) In the village of Zorah, in Palestine, lived Manoah and his wife, who were supernaturally informed that their own son was to be a Nazarite, one consecrated to God from his birth, as a deliverer for Israel. His long hair was the sign of this consecration and his badge of office as a Nazarite. Giving up his hair was giving up his calling. (Verses 1-5.)
   (c) Samson's prenatal influences were of the best. His mother was careful of diet, of drink, and of thoughts, and was an early advocate of eugenics. (Verse 7.)
   (d) He was the right sort of a boy, and "he

grew and the Lord blessed him." (Verse 24.)

3. His Tremendous Strength.

(a) He killed a young mountain lion or wild cat barehanded. This was not an African lion. (Judges 14:5-6.)

(b) Tied with two cords, he broke them with ease. (Judges 15:13-14.)

(c) He "took the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts and went away with them, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of a hill." These gates were wooden gates, and the total weight was between one thousand and two thousand pounds. The hill was a sandy hill.

(d) He was bound with cords made of grapevines, and he broke them "as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire." (Judges 16:9.)

(e) When fastened around and around with new ropes, he "broke them from off his arms like a thread." (Judges 16:12.)

(f) His hair was woven into the web on an oriental loom, and with a jerk of his head he wrenched loose the fastenings, pulling up the stake to which the loom was attached. (Judges 16:14.)

(g) Standing between two uprights supporting a bleacher-like porch in the court-

yard of the palace, he displaced them with a supreme effort, allowing the structure to collapse. (Judges 16:29-30.)

4. **Modern Parallels of Strength.**

(a) It is a common circus stunt for men to attach a chain to a comb which fastens in the hair, and by a jerk of the head draw out nails from a board.

(b) Clarence Verrill, Yale '99, as a child was sickly and puny. Physicians agreed that his chances of growing up were very small. Determined, however, that he would live, he worked out his own cure, which was, in brief, fresh air, exercises, and nourishing food, and in April, 1897, he broke all college records for strength tests. He was an all-round athlete, captain of baseball, played on football eleven, won many track events, rowed on the college crew, was an expert swimmer, and was also a prominent boxer, fencer and wrestler. Contrary to the practice of most college athletes, he never gave up his training.

5. **The Reason for Strength.**

Health and physical power do not mean much unless used for some spiritual purpose. No man can hope to have as much strength as a horse, and if there were no standard of value other than the physical one, horses

would be worth more than men. Often the strongest man can scarcely earn a dollar and a half a day, and that is because he has not learned how to use his strength. A very healthy and vigorous man, despite his strength, may have a bad influence on all the community because he is bad. Strength is to be used for service, and only then does it become really valuable to the world. Professionalism in sports has, through its attendant evils of dishonesty and gambling, done much to rob the world of strength and skill which otherwise might have been utilized for definite Christian service.

Questions for Discussion

1. What tribe continually sought to capture the Israelitish people?
2. With reference to leaders, what providential thing always happens in great national crises?
3. What is true of prenatal influence?
4. Tell some facts relating to Samson's birth?
5. What is strength?
6. Cite instances of his tremendous strength. (Judges 14:5-6; 15:13-14; 16:9; 16:12; 16:14; 16:29-30.)
7. Name some modern parallels of strength.
8. What is the real purpose of strength?

FOR NOTES

VIII. THE TRAGEDY OF WASTED STRENGTH

1. **The Steps in Samson's Downfall.**

   (a) As a boy he was "at times moved by the spirit of the Lord" and he gave some promise of making good as Israel's deliverer. (Judges 13:25.)

   (b) His first act of manhood, his choice of a bride, was a mistake. Against his parents' will, and in defiance of patriotic motives, he married a girl who belonged to the enemy, the Philistines, merely because she was physically attractive. (Judges 14:1-3.)

   (c) Betrayed by his wife, he began his belated fight against the Philistines, not for patriotic principle, but for personal vengeance, in order to get even. (Judges 15:11.)

   (d) Leaving the pure love of his wife, he entered upon an impure life, which quickly brought his downfall. (Judges 16:1-21.)

   (e) With his eyes put out, his strength taken away, as a slave of the Philistines, he again so lived as to recover his strength, and at last, when his tormentors brought him out to mock his helplessness, with one final prayer for help, he wrecked the

structure, which thus became his own tomb and that of thousands of his enemies.

(f) Despite his tragic end, Samson did much to accomplish his purpose. In the collapse of the building, many "heads of houses" were slain.

(g) This sad spectacle of wasted strength and of physical and spiritual failure on account of evil finds its parallel in every village and city.

2. The Workers may Fail but the Work Goes On.

(a) Something more than a great opportunity and great native ability are needed to produce a national leader or a successful life. Many a promising boy turns out badly.

(b) Samson had not only physical strength; he had cleverness, as is shown by the riddle and the story of the foxes.

(c) What he lacked was *personal goodness* and *unselfish patriotism*. The two usually go together. No dissipated man ever did a supremely great unselfish work in the world.

(d) Christ, in the Parable of the Talents, which are lost if not rightly used, tells us the story of Samson in another way. (Matt. 25: 14-30.)

(e) God prepared the way and gave Samson

every opportunity to deliver Israel, but even God himself is helpless in the presence of a stubborn human will.

(f) But God carried on his work despite Samson, and a little later, under Samuel, Saul, and David, the Philistines were driven out.

3. The Athlete's Temptation.

Samson's physical makeup brought him temptations which a less virile man would never have known. A young fellow was rebuking an older man for losing his temper. "I control more temper when I'm angry than you ever had," was the retort. As strength and ability increase, so temptations increase. The bigger the man, the greater his battles. Christ fought three of his temptations for forty days. Only as we develop self-restraint and firm purposes is it safe to have strength and power entrusted to us.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the great mission Samson had to perform?
2. What was the first big mistake Samson made? (Judges 14:1-3.)
3. What happened when he avenged a personal grievance? (Judges 15:11.)
4. What was the next step in Samson's downfall? (Judges 16:1-21.)

5. Describe Samson's tragic end. (Judges 16:30-31.)

6. Think of others who have made similar sad spectacles of their lives.

7. What beside mere muscle is needed to produce a national leader or a successful life?

8. What did Samson lack in his life?

9. When is God helpless?

10. Was Samson's life an utter failure?

11. What men completed his job?

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

PETER, The Oarsman

Study Subject: Leadership

Definition: Ability to direct

Biblical Material: Luke 5:1-7; John 21:3-7; Mark 1:16; Mark 6:45-51

"The gymnastics that makes you hold your head up tends to straighten your moral behavior."—*Edward Howard Griggs.*

IX. THE OARSMAN

1. **The Fisherman.**

Peter and Andrew, James and John, two sets of brothers, were partners in the fishing business on the Sea of Galilee for a long period before they ever knew the Master. The Sea of Galilee is famous for the number and quality of its fish, and Peter probably had no difficulty by his day's work in his boat in earning a living for himself and wife. (Mark 1:16-19.)

2. **Self-Reliance in Emergencies.**

The lake is surrounded by beautiful hills which are almost mountainous, and owing to the great difference in the temperature of the various elevations, violent and sudden storms are a very frequent occurrence. The fishing boats are often in the greatest peril. Peter as a boy and man, under these circumstances, must have developed great skill in handling boats. Power boats were, of course, unknown, and instead of steam, gasoline, or electricity, even for the largest craft, sails and oars were the only known means of propulsion. (Storms are described in John 6:16-18; Mark 4:35-38.)

3. **Characteristics.**

Professional fishermen, even today, are usually very hardy and strong in physique.

Their calling is among the most dangerous of all. "Fishin' Jimmy" thus described other qualities developed by fishing: "Patience, knowledge of the interests of the fish, faith in things unseen, skill, delicacy of touch, refusal to be discouraged, unlimited perseverance, conviction he has not exhausted the possibilities of his art."

4. Some Biblical Passages which Show Peter as an Oarsman.

(a) Peter and Andrew in their boats at work. (Mark 1:15.)
(b) Peter rowing his boat for Jesus. (Luke 5:1-7.)
(c) An exciting trip in a storm, rowing almost all night. (Mark 6:45-51.)
(d) Swimming from his boat to the shore to meet the Master. (John 21:1-8.)

5. Modern Parallels.

(a) Any day on New Fish Wharf, South Boston, or at the docks in Gloucester, sturdy fishermen may be met ashore from their perilous trips, which range the Atlantic from Cape Cod to Newfoundland. These are necessarily brave men.
(b) Some of the greatest men of our day have been enthusiastic followers of Izaak Walton, such as Henry van Dyke and Grover Cleveland.

(c) Rowing has come to be one of the most popular intercollegiate sports. To make the crew, especially at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, or Cornell, is one of the highest athletic honors. Ten Eyck, Courtney, and other coaches have gained renown by their mastery in this branch of sport.

6. **The Early Disciples.**

It is interesting to note that the Apostles whom Jesus chose to introduce Christianity to the world were mostly strong, out-of-doors men, who had worked with their hands. They were men who presumably were of strong physique. To men with red blood, Christ still makes his appeal, and such men need him most.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who was Peter?
2. Describe the country in which he lived.
3. Why were storms sudden and frequent in this section?
4. Name some characteristics of fishermen.
5. Give instances of Peter's ability as an oarsman.
6. Name some modern parallels of fishermen and oarsmen. (Mark 1:16-19; Luke 5:1-7; Mark 6:45-51; Luke 5:2-10.)
7. What evidence have you discovered which proves that the early Christians were physically strong?

8. Why do physically strong men need Christianity?

9. Why does Christ need strong and competent men for his kingdom?

FOR NOTES

X. THE LEADER

1. **Qualities of an Oarsman.**

   Peter's life as an oarsman on the Sea of Galilee, developing physical stamina, resourcefulness, quickness of thought and action in an emergency (as when a squall of wind appeared), and courage in the face of frequent danger tended to fit him for his later leadership in founding organized Christianity.

2. **Unpromising Material.**

   His development as a leader was gradual. At first he was over-impulsive, conceited, fickle, and very slow to learn.

   (a) His over-impulsiveness appears in his rash attack on Malchus at the time of Jesus' arrest. (John 18:10-11.)

   (b) His conceit is shown by his boasting. (Mark 14:29.)

   (c) The Master pointed out his fickleness to him. (Luke 22:31-32.)

   (d) The Master rebuked him for his slowness to understand. (Matt. 16:23.)

3. **Leaders must be developed.**

   Even Jesus could not find leaders ready-made; he took the material at hand, recognizing undeveloped qualities of leadership in his followers; he trained them for responsibility. When first he met Peter, he predicted

Peter would be a rock-like leader. (John 1: 42.) In the church, the Young Men's Christian Association, in athletics, in politics, and wherever direction is required, the necessary leadership must come by a similar method. The world is looking for competent leadership, but it comes by developing the qualities of those already engaged in a given subject.

4. **Everybody has a Chance.**

The ambition to be a leader is wholly commendable. It is perfectly right for a player to wish to captain the team if he believes he has the ability to do so. No man has a right to seek to be a leader unless he feels he can deliver the goods. The safest rule is to let the other fellows judge who is the man best fitted to lead. If a man has qualities for leadership, they will surely be recognized without his pushing himself for office. Humility is a sure sign of greatness. James and John and their mother were sharply rebuked for place-hunting of a selfish sort, which is always despicable. (Matt. 20: 20-21.)

5. **Some Biblical Descriptions of Peter's Leadership.**

(a) He was usually the spokesman for the other disciples. (Matt. 16: 16.)

(b) He was the skipper of the fishing vessel. (Luke 5: 3.)

(c) Probably he was in command of the

vessel which crossed the lake in the storm. (John 6:17-31.)

(d) After the crucifixion, he led the disciples back to their fishing. (John 21:3.)

(e) He took the leadership of the church at Pentecost, and with Paul was its chief leader until his death, when he was crucified head downward.

(f) His leadership did not end with his death. His second letter to the church, which is preserved in our Bible, is a sort of will by which he endeavors that after his death they may be able to keep these things always in remembrance. (II Peter 1:12-13; 3:1.)

6. A Big Question.

Every leader, whether boy or king, must decide whether he will seek his own advantage or whether he will serve unselfishly those whom he leads. A preacher may be selfish, or he may pour out his life for his people. A political leader may look for the main chance, or he may really try to do the best thing for those who elected him. All leaders face this question. Christ, the supreme leader, had no thought of himself, but gave his life for all the world.

Questions for Discussion

1. What things happening in his daily work fitted Peter to become a great leader?

2. What were his outstanding faults? Are they yours? (John 18:10-11; Mark 14:29; Luke 22:31-32; Matt. 16:23.)

3. Cite an instance of his great weaknesses. (Mark 14:29; John 18:10-11.)

4. Are leaders ready-made or must they develop themselves?

5. How are leaders developed?

6. Give instances of Peter's ability as a leader. (Matt. 16:16; Luke 5:3; John 6:17-31; John 21:3; II Peter 3:1.)

7. What big question must every leader face?

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

PAUL, The Sailor and Swimmer

Study Subject: Pluck

Definition: Perseverance or gameness under difficulties

Biblical Material: Acts 27:26; II Corinthians 11:23-33

"Get health. No labor, pains or exercise that can gain it must be grudged."—*Emerson.*

XI. PAUL'S ATHLETIC SYMPATHIES

1. **The Influence of Boyhood Scenes—Sailors, Soldiers and Gymnastics.**

   (a) Paul was born in Tarsus, a seaport city of great importance, with a world-wide commerce. As a boy visiting the water-front, he saw ships and met sailors from all parts of the then known world. Thus he came to know and love the active life of the seafaring man.

   (b) While there was no garrison of Roman soldiers at Tarsus, Paul as a Roman must early have come in contact with the Roman soldiery. He repeatedly refers to soldiers, weapons, and events of the hand-to-hand warfare which was the only kind known to his age. These soldiers were necessarily athletic. They had to be men of muscle and physical strength. Paul knew and liked their outdoor life.

   (c) The gymnasium was a conspicuous feature of the life of his time. The first public or municipal gymnasium was located at Tarsus. Gladiatorial contests, which were not always bloody, were the national sport, like baseball to-day. Running, quoit throwing, wrestling, and boxing were popular games. The people generally lived an outdoor life, and to the Greeks, physical development was as important as

is schooling in the thought of our age. Nothing could be "good" which was not "beautiful" to the eye. They worshiped symmetry of body as they worshiped symmetry of architecture. Paul was educated in this atmosphere.

2. **Paul Probably did not have a Rugged Physique.**

We have no way of knowing about Paul's own physique. His exploits would indicate he must have had much endurance. Some think his "thorn in the flesh" (II Cor. 12:7) was a physical ailment which humiliated him. There is at least one mention in his letters of a painful sickness. (Gal. 4:13.)

3. **Pluck Does not Depend on Muscle.**

One story about Paul, which may or may not be true, is that he was small, baldheaded, knock-kneed, and not very attractive to look at. If so, he is an example of how a man with an insignificant body can still have a courageous soul. Many men have the spirit of football players without having sufficient muscle to do much at the game. Pluck does not necessarily depend on muscle.

4. **Sometimes the Small Man Triumphs.**

Pluck, it will thus be seen, is as much a matter of the spirit as of the body. The smaller boy often has the most pluck. The

bully frequently goes down before a man half his size. What really counts is a man's nerve. Napoleon, John Wesley, and many of the world's greatest men have been small in stature.

5. **His Athletic Interest.**

While Paul probably performed his athletic feats by sheer pluck, and while he had not the physique of the athlete, it is noticeable he loved strength in other men and sympathized with athletic development. Thus many a college student who would be happy to play on the teams is forced to play the game from the side lines. The man of intellectual and spiritual strength should not sneer at physical power simply because it is denied him.

6. **Some Bible Verses which Show Paul's Athletic Sympathies.**

(a) Running and fighting. (I Cor. 9:25-27.)
(b) Fighting the good fight. (I Tim. 6:12.)
(c) A runner finishing the course. (II Tim. 4:7.)
(d) The bleachers. (Hebrews 12:1.)
(e) The armor and weapons of a Roman soldier. (Eph. 6:11-15.)
(f) Strength. (Eph. 6:10.)
(g) The Greek games—wrestling. (Eph. 6:12.)

7. The Modern Church Shares Paul's Athletic Sympathy.

This sympathy with physical development, found throughout the Bible, is repeated in much of the religious thought of our own time. It is now no uncommon thing to see an athletic minister. "Billy" Sunday once played baseball on the Chicago Nationals. Bishop Hughes is an expert tennis player. Many boys' clubs, Sunday school classes, brotherhoods, and other church organizations have baseball or basket ball teams. The Young Men's Christian Association, through its gymnasia and athletics, is everywhere preaching a gospel of health and physical development. The triangular badge of the Association stands for symmetrical development of body, mind, and spirit.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was Paul's early environment?
2. Where was the first public gymnasium located?
3. Does pluck depend upon muscle?
4. Upon what beside muscle does pluck largely depend?
5. Name some world characters who were small in stature or physically weak.
6. Give instances of Paul's athletic sympathies. (I Cor. 9:23-27; I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:1; Eph. 6:11-18, 6:10.)
7. How does the modern church show its interest in the physical welfare of humanity?

FOR NOTES

XII. SOME OF PAUL'S PLUCKY ACHIEVEMENTS

1. **An Impromptu Captain.**

   Having learned much about the sea as a boy, he practically took command of his ship in the great storm which wrecked it, because he was the one best fitted to bring hope and safety out of the panic. He swam ashore after the wreck, possibly by aid of a spar. **(Acts 27.)**

2. **Other Shipwrecks.**

   (a) At one time after being shipwrecked he was in the water a day and a night. Only a plucky swimmer could have survived. (II Cor. 11:25.)

   (b) In all, he was shipwrecked four times at least, but still continued a fearless traveler in his great work of bringing Christianity for the first time to Europe.

3. **Mobbed.**

   Knowing his life was in greatest danger, he nevertheless went up to Jerusalem, where he was attacked by an angry mob, dragged out of the Temple, and beaten almost to death. He was fortunately rescued by the Roman soldiers when well-nigh unconscious. Nevertheless, he insisted, bloody and bruised as he was, on facing the mob from the stairs and

preached to them until their screeches of rage drowned his voice. Nothing daunted, he tried next day to preach to the Jewish officials, and later when he could have been set free by remaining silent, again he refused liberty and appealed to Nero, remaining under arrest so that he could get to Rome, where he preached also. (Acts 22-27.)

4. **Stoned.**

At Lystra, after Paul was stoned into unconsciousness, so the people thought he was dead, they threw his body outside the city gate. When he regained consciousness, with his followers he went immediately back into the city and stayed till next day. (Acts 14:19-20.)

5. **Imprisoned.**

At Philippi, when Paul and Silas were put in prison and forced to sit all night with feet in stocks, instead of being discouraged, they sang and prayed. (Acts 16:25.)

6. **Flogged.**

Five times Paul was flogged with thirty-nine lashes. Besides this, he was "beaten with rods" three times. (II Cor. 11:24, 25.) His body must have been covered with scars. Perhaps he called these "the marks of the Lord Jesus" for whose sake he endured all this.

7. **Beheaded.**

He was betrayed by false friends, robbed in the wilderness, often hungry, often cold, sometimes ragged and shivering, often "in weariness and painfulness," yet nothing could stop this grand hero, who was so anxious to spread Christianity that he persevered until, when he had "finished the course," he was beheaded by order of Nero in the Appian Way at Rome.

8. **Livingstone a Modern Paul.**

The nearest approach to the pluck of Paul anywhere found in the modern world is the courage of David Livingstone, whose life-story every boy who loves bravery should read.

9. **The Yellow Streak Dooms the Athlete.**

Pluck or gameness or nerve, shown in Paul's life as part of his Christian character, is an essential quality of the successful athlete. Strength, control, physical endurance, are all in vain if a man has the spirit of a quitter.

10. **The Spiritual Value of Pluck.**

Perhaps the greatest value of athletics is in giving a man a plucky spirit to fight through his life work, making him unafraid to oppose evil and manfully "fight the good fight."

Questions for Discussion

1. Cite two instances of Paul's pluck, bravery, and skill as a sailor and swimmer. (Acts 27; II Cor. 11:25.)

2. Give an account of his plucky achievements in Acts 22-27, 14:19, 16:25; II Cor. 11:24-33.

3. In what way does the life of David Livingstone offer a splendid parallel?

4. How important is pluck in the makeup of an athlete?

5. What is the spiritual value of pluck?

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

JESUS, The Perfectly Balanced Personality

Study Subject: Balance

Definition: Combination of the strong qualities of personality so that each has its right proportion and none is overdeveloped.

Biblical Material: Matthew 23:1-33, 10:28, 5:17.
Mark 1:34-35, 2:15-20;
Luke 2:52, 4:28-30, 4:8-12, 19:45-46;
John 11:35, 12:2, 18:6, 18:33, 19:17.

"There are conditions for each individual under which he can do the most and best work. It is his business to ascertain those conditions and to comply with them."—*Luther H. Gulick.*

XIII. THE PHYSIQUE OF JESUS

1. There is no authentic information about Jesus' physical appearance. The artists' pictures of his face and form are based on a superstitious story which comes from early ages concerning the miraculous appearance of his likeness on a handkerchief. The world would pay any price for a genuine picture of the Saviour.

2. We can be perfectly sure that whatever his body may have been like, his personality was not effeminate. On the contrary, he was the most vigorous, brave, and masculine character of all history. Single-handed he started a revolution against the most powerful men of his day, who at last killed him but could not conquer him.

3. Reasons for **Thinking He had a Strong Physique.**

   (a) The story of his life, told by the physician Luke, speaks of his "growth in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52.)

   (b) He worked for many years as a carpenter and woodworker. Later, when he came to be a preacher, he often used illustrations drawn from his carpenter days; as, "the green wood and dry" and the "house built on a sure foundation."

(c) In those days of rough poverty for all classes of people except the nobles and soldiers, coarse food and heavy work were the rule of all the common people.

(d) There is nowhere in the gospels any hint of weakness or physical peculiarity such as we see in Paul's life.

(e) During the years of his public ministry, his days and nights were filled with taxing and continuous work of teaching and healing. Under the strain of his struggle with the Sadducees and Pharisees, no one could have survived such hardships without extraordinary power.

(f) He lived out of doors, preaching and teaching and healing, mostly by the roadside and in the open fields. Traveling hundreds of miles, he never used a conveyance, but went with his disciples on foot, from Galilee through Samaria to Jerusalem, back and forth many times. He was at home alike on the water, on the road, and at his workbench.

4. Events which would Indicate a Commanding Personal Presence.

(a) In his first sermon in his own town, the people were so angered by his denunciation that like a mob they rushed him to the top of the precipice, intending to throw him

over, but he "passing through the midst of them went his way." (Luke 4:28-30.)

(b) Repeatedly he braved the wrath of the Pharisees, denouncing them face to face, but they never dared to attack him openly. (Matt. 23:1-33.)

(c) He thrashed a mob and single-handed drove the money-changers with a whip from the Temple. (John 2:15-16.)

(d) When the soldiers and the Jews came to arrest him in the garden, they fell to the ground in fear of him. (John 18:6.)

(e) Pilate came to be almost afraid of him during the trial. (John 18:33-19:16.)

(f) After the trial, despite all his fatigue, loss of sleep, and his many wounds, he carried the heavy cross for a considerable distance. (John 19:17.)

5. Studying thus the life of Jesus, we see how mistaken were the men who thought their bodies were wholly evil, so that they went into monasteries and beat themselves with whips and "humiliated the flesh." Jesus had a healthy out-of-door interest in life, loved to eat and drink and be happy, and doubtless had a muscular right arm of which he was proud. The man who thinks it is holy to have a weak body never learned the idea from Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. Give proofs that Jesus had a powerful physique.

2. Name several events which prove his commanding personality.

3. From your study of Jesus, what was his opinion of the desirability of a clean, strong body for men?

FOR NOTES

XIV. BALANCE

1. **The Triangle.**

   The three aspects of human life requiring balanced development are body, mind, and soul.

2. **The Symmetrical Christ.**

   In Jesus, body, mind, and soul were developed in perfect proportion. He is the ideal man, sent by God to show us what we should be like. He is the finest example of symmetrical all-round personality the world has ever seen.

3. **The Model.**

   It is for this reason that men of such very different types turn to Jesus. Teachers find him the ideal teacher. Preachers find him the ideal preacher. Artists wish they could see nature with his eyes. Workmen see how he made toil sacred. The ordinary man who believes God meant we should be strong in body and mind and soul turns to Jesus for his model.

   Illustration: "Pa" Roberts, for forty years a great influence in the Boston Young Men's Christian Association, speaking of the unbalanced life, used to say "an egg will not roll nearly as far as a ball, because it is not well rounded."

4. **The Healer.**
Jesus' idea about the importance of a strong and healthful body may be learned from the fact that much of his time was spent in correcting deformities and curing various kinds of diseases. (Mark 1:34.)

5. **Science.**
Modern physiology bears this out in showing us that sound vital organs, supplied by rich, red blood, are necessary to normal life.

6. **The Superiority of Soul.**
Yet a strong body, unless it is governed by a developed mind, and unless it is used for some fine moral purpose, has little value. Few athletes would wish to be like that type of lumber-jack who is illiterate and dissipated, despite his magnificent physical development. An uncontrolled strength is worse than weakness. Indeed, however important physical development may seem to the athlete, Jesus teaches that the development of the mind and soul is far more important. He said one day, "Fear not them who are able to kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Matt. 10:28.)

7. **Some Striking Qualities.**
It is not surprising, therefore, that it is in the balance of mental and spiritual qualities that the world has learned its richest lessons from Jesus.

(a) He was joyful without being frivolous or indifferent. Dr. Fosdick points out that the only two times Jesus ever bothered to explain his conduct were when he was accused of being too happy. (Mark 2:15-20.) Yet he wept at Lazarus' death. (John 11:35.)

(b) He could be indignant without losing his temper. He denounced Scribes and Pharisees for their sins against widows and orphans (Matt. 23:14), but would not say a word in his own behalf to Pilate (John 18:36).

(c) He loved companionship, and his chief pleasure was in his close friendships (John 12:2), yet he demanded time for solitude and prayer (Mark 1:35).

(d) He was progressive, breaking many sacred traditions, like eating with his unwashed hands, doing good on Sunday, and eating all kinds of meat—yet he was careful and conservative, coming "not to destroy but to fulfill the law and the prophets." (Matt. 5:17.)

(e) He was absolutely fearless, even in the face of pain, poverty, misunderstanding, and death, yet he would do nothing for mere bravado and self-interest. (Luke 4:8-12.)

8. **A Modern Example.**

Abraham Lincoln, who for years studied the life of Jesus and tried to be like him, is a fine modern example of balance. Trained in the woods, even after he became President he astonished the nation by his marvelous feats of strength. Mentally he was one of the most highly developed men America has produced, and much of his education he dug out of books for himself. He was a great student of the Bible. Spiritually, he has often been compared to the Master.

9. **The Most Needed Characteristic.**

It is this quality of balance, perhaps, which we should most seek. Muscle without mind and soul is mere brute strength. Mind without health, or without spiritual restraint, is handicapped and may be dangerous. Spiritual zeal without education and normal physical life is likely to be fanatical and one-sided and cranky. Perfect manhood—the Jesus kind—is symmetrically developed.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is balance?
2. Why is Jesus the finest example of balance or symmetrical personality the world has ever known?
3. What proofs have we that Jesus considered a strong and healthy body important?

4. How does modern physiology bear this out?

5. Show the need of a balanced life.

6. From the following, point out the qualities by which the world has learned its richest lessons in balance: Mark 2:15-20; John 18:36; Matt. 23:13-23; John 9:10; John 12:2; Mark 1:35; Matt. 5:17; Luke 11:8-12.

7. Give a fine modern example of balance.

8. Why should we seek the balanced life?

FOR NOTES

FOR NOTES

APPENDIX

"CONNIE" MACK'S VIEWS ON CIGARETTE SMOKING

DEAR SIR:

Yours of January 1 received, and in reply will say that there is very little cigarette smoking among our baseball boys. We do everything in our power to discourage the use of cigarettes, knowing the great harm it has done to those who have been in the habit of using them.

We find that those players who do smoke never amount to a great deal in the profession, and I would say that this goes for all professions. It is my candid opinion, and I have watched very closely the last dozen years or more, that boys at the age of ten to fifteen who have continued smoking cigarettes do not as a rule amount to anything. They are unfitted in every way for any kind of work where brains are needed. Players, for instance, who should otherwise have continued in the game until they were at the age of thirty or thirty-five, have had to be let out years before their time, as the poisonous cigarettes getting into their system have unnerved and weakened them so that they were utterly unfit for the duty that they had to perform.

No boy or man can expect to succeed in this world to a high position and continue the use of cigarettes.

After all, it is only a habit, and every one should have will power enough to overcome such a habit. There are many other ways that one can enjoy himself without the ruination of health, and this cannot be done if cigarette smoking is continued.

Yours very truly,

"Connie" Mack.

The above letter from "Connie" Mack, manager of the Pennant Winners in the American League, shows what a practical and successful general knows about cigarettes.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

B. Deane Brink

Investigation shows that alcohol tends to paralyze, retard, and disturb the central brain functions. Experiments in calculation, typesetting, and memorizing show an increased number of mistakes.

A prominent physician, the examiner for a life insurance company, had this experience. "I passed as unusually good risks five Germans—young business men—who seemed in the best of health and to have superb constitutions. In a few years I was amazed to see the whole five drop off, one after another, with what ought to be mild and easily curable diseases. On compar-

ing my experience with that of other physicians, I found they were all having similar luck with confirmed beer drinkers, and my practice since has heaped confirmation upon confirmation."—Quoted from Barker's "Saloon Problem and Social Reform."

Insanity, nervous diseases, and a long list of physical ills are directly traceable to the use of beer and other alcoholic liquors. Get the book quoted above and read further into this social evil, which is rightly called "the great American issue to-day."

The superintendent of the Milwaukee poor-house said that the saloons are responsible for more than two-thirds of Milwaukee's county paupers.

Men about to commit a crime first drink heavily. This was true of the assassins of Lincoln. Three of the conspirators were common drunkards, one was a rumseller, and Booth himself was a heavy drinker. The assassin of Garfield drank heavily before committing his deed. The assassin of McKinley was a product of the saloon. The man who shot Roosevelt was a saloonkeeper.

"Drinking of alcoholic beverages, if abolished, would rip the social evil up the back, sever its spinal cord, and eliminate from the face of the earth chronic invalidism, deformities, premature deaths, blindness, feeble-mindedness, and insanity."—Dr. DeWitt G. Wilcox, Boston.

"To alcohol and tobacco, can be attributed directly the great moral and physical degeneracy of the day."—Dr. D. H. Kress, of Chicago, discoverer of the silver nitrate treatment as a cure for the cigarette habit.

The Physiological Effects. In an article in the *Popular Science Monthly,* Dr. George E. Meylan, of Columbia University, gives the results of scientific investigations from which we quote the following facts:

In from five to ten minutes after beginning to smoke an ordinary cigar, muscular power began to diminish, and in an hour, when the cigar was burned, it had fallen to about twenty-five per cent of its initial value.

From his observations of 223 college students he found that students who use tobacco invariably rank lower in scholarship than students who do not smoke. College students who acquire the smoking habit before entering college are about eight months older at entrance than the non-smokers.

All scientists who have studied the physiological effects of tobacco upon man and animals are agreed that it has a depressing influence upon the heart and circulation; also, that anything which interferes with the vigor of the circulation has a retarding effect upon growth.

All scientists are agreed that the use of tobacco in the teen age is injurious. Regarding its use by *healthy, mature* men, Dr. Meylan says there

is no scientific evidence that it is either beneficial or injurious. On certain individuals, and on all who use it excessively, there is much evidence showing its injurious effects. It has been shown conclusively, he says, that the use of tobacco by college students is closely associated with idleness, lack of ambition, lack of appreciation, and low scholarship.

Age when Smokers Acquire the Habit. Of 115 college student smokers investigated by Dr. George L. Meylan at Columbia University, and reported in the *Popular Science Monthly,* August, 1910, the ages when they first learned to smoke were as follows:

Age	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Number	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	11	11	18	30	23	16	0	1

Tests made by the writer to determine the effects of smoking upon blood pressure, showed that the action of tobacco was to produce a marked and injurious effect upon the heart and nervous system.

THE MORAL VALUE OF PLAYGROUNDS

I have a statement from our neighborhood policeman in which he says our playground has been as valuable to the city as ten policemen. The former chief of police said that the playground had materially assisted in controlling the rougher boys of the community. One of the boys on the playground said to me, "One thing you have done, Mr. Bellamy, in opening up this

playground is to stop the boys shooting craps." I am confident that in answer to your first question, the playground and much of our club and class work have caused less lying, stealing and gambling, and, I am sure, fewer arrests, for this work has been a substitute for the lawlessness of the street which would have been the life of the children.

As to the second question, I have a statement from our chief probation officer that our Hiram House Camp has been a positive assistance to him in decreasing juvenile delinquents and in building up a better standard of life. I am sure our playground and club work in the House deserve just as much force of argument as the Camp.

GEORGE A. BELLAMY,
Headworker, The Hiram House,
Cleveland, Ohio.

ROBERTS' TALK ON TRAINING

He is a wise young man who daily trains the powers of his body, mind, and soul, for he will be healthier, happier, thriftier, wiser, longer-lived, and, best of all, more spiritual, and so, of course, of more use to his fellow man.

Every young man should make it the chief aim of his life to be a "jolly good fellow" in the Young Men's Christian Association idea of that term; then earth will be to him a heaven below. The ideal Association young man strives to be a

whole, wholesome, wise, thrifty, and spiritual man, one who is always "on deck" and on his "tiptoes" for the *right* in all his doings—physical, mental, and spiritual; one who daily realizes that a little nonsense now and then is as much a Christian duty as it is to attend to business in business hours, or to his mental work at the proper time, or chop or saw wood, or take a sweating hour's work every day or so in the gymnasium.

A young man must try and live a balanced life if he wants to do the most good in this life. A ball will roll further than an egg because it is *round;* so the well-rounded man in body, mind, and soul work will go further in all his doings than the man who only develops one or two of these powers and allows the others to rot away from want of use. The physical and spiritual powers are the ones that most men use too little for their health's sake. Every live young man *must* train his mind or in a little while he won't be worth more than a dollar or two a day and in his late middle life he won't be worth that. But he is not obliged to train his body and soul, and so he often, unwisely, neglects them; for which fact, if he lives long enough, he will be very sorry, when it is too late.

Personally, from over forty-five years of dealing with young men, I have seen and talked with many who have made the great mistake of developing their minds at the expense of their bodies and souls.

I want to see Christian young men the ideal young men, and I would advise them to study their Bibles to see what fine athletic young men there were in those far-off days, and how spiritual they were as well as worldly-wise. I am very sorry to say that too many Christian men sadly neglect God's best earthly gift to them—their bodies—and so set bad examples to the young men who come under their influence.

I wish every person who reads this little talk would memorize this *hint* and say it aloud as he does his morning and evening dumb-bell or free-hand drill. He-is-a-*wise*-man-who-*daily*-trains-the-powers-of-his-body,-mind,-and-soul.

ROBERT J. ROBERTS.

CITY LIFE AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

B. DEANE BRINK

While in this outline, much emphasis has been placed on country life and its influence on character, still there is something to be said on the other side.

In the cities we find much that is evil and foul, yet we find there represented the greatest philanthropy, the greatest purity, and examples of the most aggressive and noble courage.

The conscious direction of one's activities toward a given end is more easily accomplished

in the city because of the agencies by which he may surround himself; such as educational institutions, libraries, churches, and the Young Men's Christian Association, to say nothing of the multiplied opportunities for personal contact with individuals and the mutual benefit derived therefrom.

"He who serves his brother best
Gets nearer God than all the rest."

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